

Biermann, Julia

Different meanings? The translation of inclusive education in Nigeria

ZEP : Zeitschrift für internationale Bildungsforschung und Entwicklungspädagogik 39 (2016) 3, S. 10-15



Quellenangabe/ Reference:

Biermann, Julia: Different meanings? The translation of inclusive education in Nigeria - In: *ZEP : Zeitschrift für internationale Bildungsforschung und Entwicklungspädagogik* 39 (2016) 3, S. 10-15 -
URN: urn:nbn:de:0111-pedocs-154504 - DOI: 10.25656/01:15450

<https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0111-pedocs-154504>

<https://doi.org/10.25656/01:15450>

in Kooperation mit / in cooperation with:

ZEP Zeitschrift für internationale Bildungsforschung
und Entwicklungspädagogik

"Gesellschaft für interkulturelle Bildungsforschung und Entwicklungspädagogik e.V."

<http://www.uni-bamberg.de/allgpaed/zep-zeitschrift-fuer-internationale-bildungsforschung-und-entwicklungspaedagogik/profil>

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peDOCS
DIPF | Leibniz-Institut für Bildungsforschung und Bildungsinformation
Informationszentrum (IZ) Bildung
E-Mail: pedocs@dipf.de
Internet: www.pedocs.de

Seit der Verabschiedung der Behindertenrechtskonvention der Vereinten Nationen am 3. Mai 2008 gehört das Recht auf inklusive Bildung zum Kanon der Menschenrechte. Durch die Ratifizierung der Behindertenrechtskonvention verpflichten sich die Vertragsstaaten ein „inclusive education system at all levels“ zu schaffen, das heißt, dass „persons with disabilities are not excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability“ (Art. 24). Durch die Behindertenrechtskonvention wird eine völkerrechtlich bindende Grundlage bzgl. der Teilhabe an Bildung geschaffen. Diese wird national und lokal in verschiedenen Staaten unterschiedlich rezipiert und vor dem Hintergrund der je spezifischen kulturellen, politischen und sozialen Rahmenbedingungen spezifisch in die Praxis übersetzt. Eine Aufgabe international angelegter Inklusionsforschung ist es, die internationale Diffusion und lokale Rekontextualisierung des globalen Paradigmas inklusiver Bildung zu analysieren und in ihrer Komplexität und in ihren Ambivalenzen sichtbar zu machen.

Zu dieser Aufgabe soll mit dieser ZEP-Ausgabe ein Beitrag geleistet werden: *Christian Brüggemann* führt in das Thema ein und skizziert vor dem Hintergrund bereits be-

stehender Forschungsarbeiten mögliche Forschungsperspektiven, die sich aus der oben geschilderten Entwicklung für die vergleichende und internationale Bildungsforschung ergeben. Er schlägt dabei eine Systematisierung exemplarischer Analysen nach Entstehung, Verbreitung und Aneignung globaler Normen von Bildung und Erziehung vor.

Julia Biermann, Maya Kalyanpur sowie Myriam Hummel und Rolf Werning nehmen am Beispiel von Fallstudien in Nigeria, Kambodscha sowie Guatemala und Malawi in den Blick, inwiefern und mit welchen Herausforderungen das Paradigma inklusiver Bildung auf lokaler Ebene kontextspezifisch übersetzt wird. Dabei reflektiert *Julia Biermann* die im Rahmen dieser Übersetzung deutlich werdenden Ambivalenzen mit Blick auf einen Wechsel kommunikativer Codes und stellt den konstruktiven Charakter dieses Wechsels für die globale wie auch lokale Ebene heraus. *Maya Kalyanpur* weist im Rahmen ihrer Studie sehr deutlich auf die Spannung zwischen internationalen Standards einer Implementation inklusiver Bildung einerseits und lokalen Praktiken andererseits hin und reflektiert diese Spannung im Lichte postkolonialer Theorie sowie kritischer Ansätze politischer Theorie. In der Ländervergleichsstudie von *Myriam Hum-*

mel und *Rolf Werning* wird darüber hinaus deutlich, wie sehr sich das jeweilige Verständnis inklusiver Bildung lokal unterscheiden kann und dass zusätzlich unterschiedliche Förderprämissen lokal agierender Entwicklungsorganisationen eine kohärente Implementation inklusiver Bildung behindern können.

Florian Kiuppis schließlich richtet den Blick auf die UNESCO und zeigt Bezug nehmend auf ein Forschungsprojekt aus der vergleichenden Erziehungswissenschaft auf, inwiefern sich das Verständnis inklusiver Bildung sowohl im Kontext der beiden Weltkonferenzen als auch auf organisationaler Ebene innerhalb der UNESCO gewandelt hat.

Zu guter Letzt möchten wir noch darauf hinweisen, dass sich in dieser Ausgabe auch der Kommentar auf das Thema inklusive Bildung bezieht: Hier diskutiert Joachim Schröder Probleme, die mit der Umsetzung inklusiver Bildung in der entwicklungspolitischen Zusammenarbeit verbunden sind.

*Viel Freude beim Lesen wünschen
Christian Brüggemann, Andreas Köpfer und
Claudia Bergmüller-Hauptmann*

Berlin, Freiburg und Bamberg, September 2016

Impressum

ZEP – Zeitschrift für internationale Bildungsforschung und Entwicklungspädagogik
ISSN 1434-4688

Herausgeber:

Gesellschaft für interkulturelle Bildungsforschung und Entwicklungspädagogik e.V. und KommEnt

Schriftleitung: Annette Scheunpflug/
Claudia Bergmüller

Redaktionsanschrift:

ZEP-Redaktion, Lehrstuhl Allgemeine Pädagogik, Markusplatz 3, 96047 Bamberg

Verlag:

Waxmann Verlag GmbH, Steinfurter Straße 555,
48159 Münster, Tel.: 0251/26 50 40
E-Mail: info@waxmann.com

Redaktion:

Barbara Asbrand, Claudia Bergmüller, Hans Bühler, Asit Datta, Julia Franz, Norbert Frieters-Reermann, Heidi Grobbauer (Österreich), Helmuth Hartmeyer (Österreich), Susanne Höck, Karola Hoffmann, Ulrich Klemm, Gregor Lang-Wojtasik, Sarah Lange, Volker Lenhart, Claudia Lohrenscheit, Bernd Overwien, Marco Rieckmann, Annette Scheunpflug, Birgit Schößwender, Klaus Seitz, Susanne Timm, Rudolf Tippelt

Technische Redaktion:

Sabine Lang (verantwortlich) 0951/863-1832, Sarah Lange (Rezensionen), Markus Ziebarth (Infos)

Anzeigenverwaltung: Waxmann Verlag GmbH, Martina Kaluza: kaluza@waxmann.com

Abbildungen: (Falls nicht bezeichnet) Privatfotos oder Illustrationen der Autoren

Titelbild: aquarell regenbogen abstrakt freigestellt, © bittedankeschön, www.fotolia.com

Erscheinungsweise und Bezugsbedingungen: erscheint vierteljährlich; Jahresabonnement EUR 20,-, Einzelheft EUR 6,50; alle Preise verstehen sich zuzüglich Versandkosten; zu beziehen durch alle Buchhandlungen oder direkt vom Verlag. Abbestellungen spätestens acht Wochen vor Ablauf des Jahres. Das Heft ist auf umweltfreundlichem chlorfreien Papier gedruckt. Diese Publikation ist gefördert von Brot für die Welt – Evangelischen Entwicklungsdienst, Referat für Inlandsförderung, Berlin.

ZEP

Zeitschrift für internationale Bildungsforschung
und Entwicklungspädagogik

Mit: Mitteilungen der DGfE-Kommission
Vergleichende und Internationale
Erziehungswissenschaft

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Julia Biermann

Different Meanings? The Translation of Inclusive Education in Nigeria

Abstract

Legally backed by the UN CRPD, inclusive education has gained momentum as a global education norm in recent years. Even though almost all countries worldwide have ratified this convention, the implementation of inclusive school systems is far from being a reality in most places. One specific problem in the implementation process is the translation of Article 24's mandate and obligations, which results in different understandings and policies of inclusive education. In order to analyse the tension between the human right to inclusive education and its contextual translations, I offer an alternative reading. Using data from a fieldwork-based case study conducted in Nigeria – qualitative content analysis of interviews and documents – I elicit how actors in the policy fields of education and disability understand inclusive education. This analysis illustrates that the resulting tension between the global norm and its translation has a constructive potential, which is linked to a switch between two communicative codes. The code of universality uses the UN CRPD's human rights language, while the code of contextuality allows to develop a vernacular language about the global norm. Thus, both codes enable the global norm to travel globally and to be appropriated locally.

Keywords: *Inclusive Education, UN CRPD, Translation, Vernacularisation, Global Education Policy, Nigeria*

Zusammenfassung

In den letzten Jahren ist inklusive Bildung zu einem zentralen Anliegen der internationalen Gemeinschaft geworden und hat, rechtlich abgesichert durch die UN-BRK, einen festen Platz auf der globalen Bildungsagenda erhalten. Auch wenn weltweit fast alle Staaten die UN-BRK ratifiziert haben, steht die Entwicklung inklusiver Bildungssysteme erst am Anfang. Diese Entwicklung sieht sich vor allem dem Problem der kontextspezifischen Übersetzung der Vorgaben des Artikels 24 gegenüber, die zu verschiedenen Interpretationen dieser globalen Bildungsnorm führt. Die kontextspezifischen Übersetzungen in nationalen Diskursen und Politiken stehen oft in einem Spannungsverhältnis zur Vision des Artikels 24, zu deren Interpretation dieser Beitrag einen alternativen Vorschlag erarbeitet. Die empirische Analyse basiert auf einer Fallstudie, welche in Nigeria durchgeführt wurde, und zeigt, wie verschiedene Organisationen aus den Politikbereichen Bildung und Behinde-

rung inklusive Bildung verstehen. Diese Analyse verweist auf den konstruktiven Charakter des Spannungsverhältnisses zwischen globaler Norm und deren Übersetzung, welcher auf einen Wechsel zwischen zwei verschiedenen kommunikativen Codes zurückzuführen ist. Der Code der Universalität nutzt eine menschenrechtliche Sprache, wohingegen der Code der Kontextualität die Entwicklung einer kontextspezifischen Sprache, eines Vernakulars, erlaubt. Beide Codes tragen somit dazu bei, dass inklusive Bildung zum einen als globale Bildungsnorm weltweit in Erscheinung tritt, und zum anderen, dass sie kontextspezifisch angepasst werden kann.

Schlüsselworte: *Inklusive Bildung, UN-BRK, Übersetzung, Vernakularisation, Globale Bildungspolitik, Nigeria*

Introduction

Globally, 160 out of 193 nation states are obliged to develop inclusive education systems, because they have ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2006 (United Nations, 2016). This means, these states have legally agreed to transfer the human right to inclusive education into domestic law and, eventually, an institutional reality. This process demands, according to the recently released draft General Comment on Article 24 UN CRPD, a fundamental change of education systems worldwide (Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016). For that reason, very different education systems are expected to achieve the same goal of inclusive education as formulated in Article 24 UN CRPD.

However, the UN CRPD's effect on education systems depends on the context-specific interpretation of the right to inclusive education, its legal norms and normative content. This transfer requires a discursive process among various policy actors, including state and non-state actors, in which they translate and thus convey the global norm's ideas. Even though actors involved are likely to develop different approaches to inclusive education, they together create a context-specific language about the global norm that eventually appropriates the right to inclusive education. But, these context-specific translations may not correspond with the treaty's original vision. These alterations thus entail a specific challenge for researchers interested in

the UN CRPD's implications on national education systems, that is summarised in this question: How does the UN CPRD's vision of inclusive education relate to its context-specific translations? More precisely, do translations that transform the original vision contradict or support the global norm?

In order to confront this challenge, I examined the institutional change of schooling under the auspices of the UN CRPD in Nigeria and Germany (see Biermann, 2016). For this paper, I refer to the Nigerian case study where the main challenge is to provide access to schooling for all children as 10.5 million children have no access to education at all (UNESCO, 2015, p. 59; UNESCO, 2014). I will show how Nigerian policy actors understand inclusive education and, subsequently, how this translation relates to the global norm. The empirical analysis thus focuses on different approaches to inclusive education, which align the global norm with the Nigerian institutional context. Based on these results, I argue that the global norm depends as much on its original vision as on its context-specific translations in order to travel globally and diffuse locally. This is grounded in the procedural rules of translation itself, i.e. the 'politics of translation', which are characterised by a switch between two communicative codes: While the code of universality allows policy actors to acknowledge the human rights frame of inclusive education that claims universal applicability, the code of contextuality allows them to restrict this vision in accordance with the institutional context. The reference to codes follows Rottenburg's (2005, 2009) anthropological work about interlocutors' need to draw on arguments about the existence of one reality as much as their need to draw on arguments about the existence of many realities. In particular, Rottenburg is interested in the communicative function of these arguments but does not try to solve the underlying epistemological paradox. The main purpose of this paper is thus to develop a theoretical argument about the 'politics of translation'. To exemplify the argument, I use the Nigerian case study as an empirical template, but do not provide deeper insights into the historical or current peculiarities of Nigeria's school system.¹

The analysis proceeds as follows: I first introduce the theoretical and empirical framework, then present the empirical analysis and its results, and finally discuss the theoretical implications thereof.

Theoretical and empirical framework

In order to analyse the transfer of the global UN CRPD-backed norm of inclusive education into a national context, this section introduces the theoretical and conceptual framework. In particular, it specifies the content of the global policy and its transfer as a discursive process of translation and eventually introduces the empirical database.

Article 24 UN CRPD: content and scope

The substantive content of the global inclusive education norm is coined in and legally backed by Article 24 UN CPRD and its General Comment.

The UN CRPD specifies the human right to education for persons with disability in terms of non-discrimination on the basis of equal opportunity. For that reason, Article 24 UN CRPD expands the right to education to a right to inclusive

education, which the first draft of the General Comment on Article 24 UN CRPD defines as "a process that transforms culture, policy and practice in all educational environments to accommodate the differing needs of individual students, together with a commitment to remove the barriers that impede that possibility" (Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016, paragraph 9). Conversely, educational exclusion and segregation on the grounds of disability violate the human right to inclusive education (Degener, 2009).

Based on discursive institutionalism (Schmidt, 2008), I understand Article 24 UN CRPD as a program of institutional change that offers a vision for the development of education systems worldwide. This program defines, in a human rights-language, inclusive education as a solution to the problems of educational discrimination and inequality, which can be summarised in this global formula: The right to inclusive education demands that all educational environments include and serve the needs of all students. As a result, the UN CRPD carries forward the global inclusive education norm and equips it with a legal character. To become effective though, the legal obligations of Article 24 UN CRPD need to be transferred to and become effective in different national contexts.

The transfer of article 24 UN CRPD:

A process of translation

The transfer of the global inclusive education norm requires its translation, which first of all allows the blending of the global and the local (Czarniawska, 2012; Shimada, 2006). This conjuncture points to the context-specific appropriation and thus interpretation of the global human-rights norm of inclusive education. "Translation thus understood means transformation and transference not only of utterances, but of anything. [...] To set something in a new place is to construct it anew" (Czarniawska, 2012, p. 27).

For the context-specific translation of global human rights ideas, Levitt and Merry (2009) show how global ideas "connect with the ideologies already in place" (p. 442). Based on their analysis of global women rights in four different countries, the authors term the "appropriation and local adaptation" of global ideas a process of "vernacularization" (p. 441). Vernacularisation denotes the development of context-specific understandings of global ideas; i.e. their translation into the vernacular language specific to each context. Thus, vernacularisation qualifies the discursive process of translation as it works out that global human rights ideas need to be linked to local realities in order to become meaningful. For example, the global human rights-based norm of inclusive education challenges segregated schooling in special schools, which, however, is – despite ratification of the UN CRPD – a persistent reality in many stratified school systems all over the world (e.g. Anderson & Boyle 2015; Biermann & Powell, 2014; Blanck, Edelstein & Powell, 2013; Donohue & Bornman, 2014). The translation of Article 24 UN CPRD thus designates a discursive policy process in which various actors produce knowledge about inclusive education, e.g. lawmakers, ministries, administrations, associations, unions, and civil society organisations. This process is influenced by each country's specific policy context, including the institutional environment of schooling, which sets the background for appropriating the global norm.

The global norms' transfer to national or local contexts thus may lead to different outcomes. For example, vernacularisation could be characterised by a "creative reinterpretation and mobilization of human rights language" for other purposes than originally intended (Levitt & Merry, 2009, p. 449). Alternatively, national education reforms could be characterised by a "policy bilingualism" where "one set of reforms is advanced with funding from donors [...] while another – sometimes diametrically opposed – set of reforms is promoted with local or national support" (Steiner-Khamsi, 2010, p. 331). Eventually, processes of change could lead to "decoupling" where commitments to implement the UN CRPD are contradicted by national or local policies (Meyer, Boli, Thomas & Ramirez, 1997, p. 154f.).

In sum, the translation of Article 24 UN CRPD is a discursive process which appropriates the human rights-norm against a particular context and leads to the global norm's vernacularisation. The next section specifies upon which empirical basis this process has been analysed among policy actors in Nigeria after the UN CRPD ratification in 2010.

The empirical analysis: Data base and unit of analysis

The empirical analysis reconstructs approaches to inclusive education as a discourse among institutional actors using a corpus of more than 70 documents and more than 40 interviews compiled during a six-month research stay in 2012/2013 (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Keller, 2011). The analytical focus is on the qualitative interpretation of documents and interviews of actors who are mandated to deal with Article 24 UN CRPD, e.g. in their capacity as either law and policy makers in the policy fields of education and disability, or as their respective target groups (Schneider & Janning, 2006, p. 65). Precisely, state actors such as the federal government and legislators are obliged to develop inclusive education systems for which they, as required by Articles 4(3) and 33(3) UN CRPD, need to consult with non-state actors, particularly with organisations that represent persons with disabilities. Because Nigeria is a receiver of international aid, international development organisations are also involved in this process.

To coin a respective unit of analysis, I engage with policy actors at the level of organisations and apply the concept of the organisational field. An organisational field comprises "those organizations that, in the aggregate, constitute a recog-

nized area of institutional life" (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, p. 148). For this analysis, the organisational field is made up of policy actors that are, according to their organisations' mandate and goal, confronted with the human rights norm of inclusive education, i.e. organisations in the policy fields of education and disability at the federal level.² The focus is on the federal level, because policy actors here are first entrusted with the development of an inclusive education system. In particular, federal policy actors are responsible for converting the international treaty into domestic law and develop a policy frame that is applicable nationwide. Given the cross-sectoral nature of this organisational field, the translation of the global policy is thus likely to occur "under conditions of heterogeneity" (Rottenburg, 2009, p. 191).

The table below visualises the organisational field, distinguishing between the organisations' formal status as state or non-state actors, and their policy field of activity. The exact compilation of this organisational field is thus an empirical result itself.

I have collected documents and conducted guided interviews with representatives across this organisational field focusing on the respective organisation's mandate and approach to Article 24 UN CRPD, e.g. Federal Ministries and Commissions, various civil society organisations, including disabled persons' organisations, as well as individuals promoting the rights of persons with disabilities or 'Education for All'. In addition, I interviewed representatives of international development organisation, e.g. UNESCO, World Bank, bilateral development programmes, international NGOs and international disabled persons' organisations. The results discussed in this paper stem from the in-depth analysis of 12 most-contrasting interviews across the organisational field regarding the organisations' approaches to inclusive education, and the two core federal education policy documents that frame and regulate the school system nationwide.

The translation of inclusive education in Nigeria: Four empirical results

In order to empirically engage with the process of translation, this section reconstructs the knowledge about inclusive education available in the organisational field. For that reason, the focus is not on the peculiarities of each organisation, but on the overall knowledge formation. This reconstruction has led to four results: the first two results illustrate how policy actors understand inclusive education, the latter two results show how these approaches connect with education policies and laws already in place.

Result 1: Policy actors from both policy fields, education and disability, understand inclusive education as a global educational trend that aims to implement 'one classroom for all': "what is preached today is inclusive education, [...], where all children learn together irrespective of their disabilities" (1205, state/education).³ This vision, however, remains unattainable as policy actors point to its impracticability given the current state of Nigeria's school system. For example, one interviewee (0107, non-state/education) states: "I think inclusive education is good, but, from the practicality

	State Actors	Non-state Actors
Policy Field Education	Federal Ministry of Education National Commissions and Parastatals Legislators	Civil Society Organisations Individual Activists
	In Collaboration with International Development Organisations (Nigerian Branches)	
Policy Field Disability	Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development National Commissions and Parastatals Legislators	Civil Society Organisations Individual Activists
	In Collaboration with International Development Organisations (Nigerian Branches)	

Tab. 1: Organisational Field; source: by author

point of view, it may be impossible to have all children in the inclusive education". Similarly, another actor (1023B, non-state/disability) emphasises that "they would expect a person with visual impairment, person with audible impairment to be in the same school and in the same classroom from all indications, that's (inaudible) obviously not be very practicable". To summarise, policy actors depart from a similar approach to inclusive education as the joint education of children with and without disabilities in the same classroom and, simultaneously, challenge its practicability.

Result 2: Rejecting the global formula of 'one classroom for all', policy actors instead approach inclusive education either as a concern of educating children with disabilities, or of providing education to all excluded and marginalised children.

National organisations from both policy fields, education and disability, tend towards the first approach, which foregrounds the special needs of students with disabilities. Accordingly, implementing inclusive education demands special education professionalisation, including teacher training and materials. So, one interviewee (0107, non-state/education) reasons that: "[...] it would be an ideal situation to have all children in inclusive education. But I doubt if that much will happen. [...] You need a specialised program for them [disabled children, J.B.], you can't just put them in the classroom". Supporting this point, another actor (1112, non-state/disability) notes: "[...] the structures are not built in such a way that includes you as a person with disability, the provisions in that school, they don't have sign language interpreter [...], they don't have provisions for a visually impaired person, braille and all of that [...]".

In contrast, for international organisations inclusive education becomes a concern of school exclusion in general so that they foreground 'Education for All'. Raising awareness about inclusive education, one interviewee (1010, international/education) describes that "[...] inclusive education was equated to special education. [...] We then ask them, are there still some other groups who are excluded from the education system and they are not living with disability? [...] So it was from there that we were trying to create [...] a common understanding around inclusive education and will not equate inclusive education to special education alone as an Education for All".

As a result, policy actors develop two contextual approaches to inclusive education that either demand increasing special education professionalisation or tackling educational exclusion.

Result 3: The appropriation of inclusive education as a concern of special education or 'Education for All' is consistent with Nigeria's federal education legislation and policy, which targets 'Universal Basic Education' (UBE), i.e. free and compulsory basic education for every Nigerian child.

'UBE' is backed by two central federal policy documents: the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Act and the National Policy of Education (NPE). Introduced in 1999 and passed in 2004, the UBE Act directly responds to the 2000 Dakar Declaration which reiterated the obligation to make 'Education for All' a reality by 2015. The Act distinguishes between Basic and Universal Basic Education based on the notion of special groups. While "Basic Education" comprises ear-

ly childhood care and education as well as nine years of formal schooling, "Universal Basic Education" extends these two areas by adding, inter alia, the education of special groups. Special groups are 'nomads and migrants, girl-child and women, almajiri, street children and disabled groups'. In addition, the 2004 NPE (section 10[94]) foresees for 'the disabled, the disadvantaged, and the gifted and talented' special education, which is "a special educational training given to people with special needs". In addition, and backing the UBE vision, the NPE (Section 10, 96 [c] [i]) requires that "[a]ll necessary facilities that would ensure easy access to education shall be provided, e.g: (i) inclusive education or integration of special classes and units into ordinary/public schools under UBE scheme".

In conclusion, the 'UBE' provisions target the problem of school exclusion by providing free and compulsory 'Education for All', including special education. This relation can be summarised in a formula: Education for All = Universal Basic Education = Regular Education + Special Education. This formula explains and justifies policy actions that are intended to meet obligations stemming from the right to inclusive education.

Result 4: The local formula conjoins both approaches to inclusive education, either as a concern of disabled children or all excluded groups, by its common 'UBE' core. Even more, both approaches to inclusive education foreground different elements of this UBE-formula. Whereas international organisation focus on 'Education for All' as the final outcome of educational change, national organisations highlight special education as a specific policy object in this process. From both perspectives, education becomes inclusive in that it responds to the needs of all children, including special needs, under the common frame of 'UBE'.

The global norms' vernacularisation: Translation in two codes

The interpretation of these four empirical findings occurs in two theoretically-guided steps. First, I explain the global norm's translation into a local formula as a process of vernacularisation. Second, I argue that the resulting tension results from a switch between communicative codes that not only enables vernacularisation, but also the maintenance of the global norm's tenets.

Policy actors' approaches to inclusive education transform the global norm into a local formula that adheres to the vision of 'UBE'. This means, they depart from the global formula of 'all educational environments include all students' – in short: 'one classroom for all' – by rejecting its applicability in the Nigerian context. Alternatively, they appropriate inclusive education in terms of special education and 'EFA', which both correspond to the 'Universal Basic Education' legislation. In other words, policy actors accept the idea of inclusive education, but not its content – a result that, in addition, hints to the power effects of discourses that influence the legitimacy of inclusive education policies. Hence, 'UBE' becomes the legitimate content-core of the local inclusive education formula, which "take[s] on some of the ideological and social attributes of the place, but also retain[s] some of [the] original formulation" (Levitt & Merry, 2009, p. 446). Conversely, the local 'UBE'-formula becomes the vernacular policy language that

policy actors use to confer meaning to the global norm against the context-specific institutional background. This vernacularisation enables the insertion of the global norm into a given institutional environment that results in a local formula that is in tension with the global norm.

Given this translation, one could ask if the local formula is a “creative reinterpretation” (Levitt & Merry, 2009, p. 449), an example of “policy bilingualism” (Steiner-Khamsi, 2010, p. 331), or even an instance of “decoupling” (Meyer et al., 1997, p. 154f.). These three alternatives of reading the global norm’s vernacularisation entail a controversy about reality, i.e. which of the understandings is “true”: Only the global formula, only the local formula, or both to some extent or equally? Instead of answering this question, I want to make it to the object of analysis. This means, I do not engage with the tension’s effects, but rather delve into its origins. My argument is that the translation is characterised by a switch between two communicative codes that allows vernacularisation in the first place. I develop this argument in three steps: First, by referring to Rottenburg (2005, 2009) and Tilly (2006), who explain the importance of different codes for information exchange and reasoning; second, by introducing an example to illustrate this point; and third, by summarising the codes’ role in the process of vernacularisation.

Rottenburg (2005, 2009) elaborates on the peculiarities of negotiations under the condition of heterogeneity; conditions that are constitutive for the translation of global ideas in a heterogeneous organisational field. These negotiations need to operate on “generally agreed upon procedures” and include, as a “political and juristic necessity”, the “assumption of a single and attainable reality” (Rottenburg, 2005, p. 273). This single reality allows all negotiation parties to relate to the same “overarching frame of reference” and to identify differences between diverse descriptions of the world, (Rottenburg, 2009, p. 195); for our case, the difference between the global and local formula. For that reason, statements about one reality must be formulated and interpreted in a specific way, i.e. “metacode”, that allows negotiators, or translators, to describe “this reality [...] without distorting it”. In contrast, statements that explain the world differently are formulated in “cultural codes” that are “each a basis for their own reality” (Rottenburg, 2005, p. 260). Statements issued in a metacode claim that the same information is valid in different contexts, while statements issued in cultural codes are only valid in a particular context (Rottenburg, 2009, p. 192). In other words, the exchange of information about a global idea requires actors to formulate and interpret this information in different ways, i.e. codes. Codes “provide the basis for the giving of reasons” that follows a “logic of appropriateness” (Tilly, 2006, p. 104f.). Put another way, codes allow policy actors to justify their actions based on their understandings of inclusive education, by the fact that they correspond to a specific institutional context, either the international or the national sphere (Tilly, 2006, p. 102). This means that policy actors in the organisational field acknowledge the global policy’s understanding of inclusive education that, backed by human rights language, claims universal applicability. But, they also see it as a contextual necessity to restrict this global vision and to develop a vernacular language that transforms the original idea into a contextually-adapted formula.

la. For the analysis at hand I am thus going to change the terminology into a code of universality and a code of contextuality, which both assign a different scope of applicability to the global formula of inclusive education that reads as ‘all educational environments include all students’, in short: ‘one classroom for all’.

Let us consider a concrete example that illustrates the code switch. This interviewee (1108, state/disability) sees “that the world now has moved away from special schools, the world is into inclusive education”. For that reason, educating all children “in the same cycle” becomes “a good thing”. Even though advocating the global formula, this policy actor starts questioning this vision afterwards: “[...] have you ever seen a scenario like that? [...] I just read in the books”; and subsequently develops two alternative readings of inclusive education: a) “[...] maybe what is meant is that, okay, they should all be in a school, same school environment, but not necessarily the same class” and b) “What they call school for the handicap, [...] you see all kinds of persons with disability in such schools, could that be an idea of what they meant by inclusive education?”

But why do policy actors switch between two codes when talking about the global norm of inclusive education? Finalising the argument, I now point out the translational codes function for vernacularisation. The code of universality, backed by the UN CRPD’s human rights language, enables an exchange of information about inclusive education that transcends local contexts and which is encapsulated in the global formula. Conversely, policy actors all over the globe would not be able to advocate or contest inclusive education, if they could not reference a normative content that is supposed to be valid in all contexts. The code of contextuality, on the other hand, enables the adoption of the global norm by transforming its content. Conversely, policy actors would not be able to appropriate the global norm if they could not relate it to the given institutional environment. In the case of Nigeria, it furthermore becomes evident that the local formula is able to align the two approaches to inclusive education apparent in the organisational field, e.g. ‘EFA’ and special education under the umbrella of ‘UBE’. The switch from a universal into a context code thus allows policy actors to vernacularise the global norm by transforming its global formula into a local formula. In this process, it is appealing for policy actors to use the universal code, because referencing “global universals is precisely what makes human rights discourse politically powerful” (Levitt & Merry, 2009, p. 457). Hence, it stands to reason that human rights charters in general rely on a code of universality, because it is exactly the universal human rights language which allows them to travel and aim at institutional change globally. However, it takes the code of contextuality to formulate these human rights obligations in a vernacular to perpetuate institutional change in different localities, because “most human rights activity focuses on forcing or persuading states to comply with their own laws or to pass new laws” (Levitt & Merry, 2009, p. 458).

As a result, the tension between the norm’s global and local formula originates from the procedural rules of translation that eventually point towards the ‘politics of translation’. The process of translation activates two separate codes that

stress the appropriateness of different understandings of inclusive education – in relation to the context and level.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the switch between a code of universality and contextuality maintains both, the UN CRPD-backed global inclusive education norm and its vernacularisation. Otherwise, it would make little sense to speak about the worldwide implementation of the UN CRPD if there would be no code that connects the deliberations about inclusive education in countries obliged to implement Article 24. It would also make little sense to monitor this implementation process if there would be no code that facilitates translations. This peculiar relationship is best illustrated in the UN CRPD monitoring mechanism in which the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities evaluates state party reports. These reports reveal approaches to inclusive education whose local formulas become the “checklists [...] according to which experts can rate countries that vary in their approximation to” the global formula (Tilly, 2006, p. 102). Vice versa, to identify these differences and issue recommendations that adhere national developments with the convention's overall goals requires a universal code and a global formula. Even more, every translation, in turn, stabilises the global formula by providing examples of change. The global norm thus mutually depends on a universal and a vernacular policy language, because both uphold the impression that the implementation of Article 24 UN CRPD is a process that is made of just “different ways of expressing universal meaning shared by all” (Shimada, 2006, p. 90) by omitting that “the result of translation is always a change – a change in what was translated, and a change in the translator” (Czarniawska, 2012, p. 27).

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Notes

- 1 For more information about (inclusive) schooling in Nigeria see Biermann 2015a and 2015b.
- 2 This conceptualisation mirrors the main cause of Article 24 UN CRPD: to end educational exclusion on the basis of disability (OHCHR, 2016). The focus on disability, as the prominent among various risks of exclusion, reflects the historical trajectories of the respective ‘Right to Inclusive Education’, which finds its roots in approximating the fields of disability and human rights (Quinn & Degener, 2002).
- 3 The interview references are based on the following logic: Each interview is identified by a specific number. To locate each interview within the organisational field, the number is followed by the organisations’ formal status as state or non-state actors, and their policy field of activity, education or disability.

Julia Biermann

is a doctoral candidate at Humboldt University of Berlin (Germany). In her research, she analyses the influence of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) on schooling in Nigeria and Germany merging comparative institutional approaches with discourse analysis and educational disability studies.